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THE CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY
COMMUNITY



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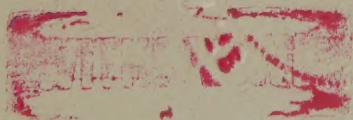
THE CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY COMMUNITY

BY

EDWIN V. O'HARA, LL.D.

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NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN A. RYAN, D.D., LL.D.



New York

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This little book is dedicated to the clergy ministering in country communities whose zeal, intelligence, and sympathy will so largely determine the future of the Church in America.

PREFACE

While it has been generally recognized that there is a grave national problem in the condition of rural America, it has not been so clearly seen that the Catholic Church in the United States is confronted with a serious situation because of her status in the rural districts of our country. The following statement aims to set forth briefly the source and extent of this Catholic problem, and to indicate some of the immediate steps which should be taken to remedy the evil.

SOURCE AND EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the enforcement of recent immigration laws the country districts of the United States have become the chief source of the increase of our population. The farm is peculiarly adapted to united and wholesome family life with the result that farm families average three children whereas city families average one and six-tenths children. The farms of the United States with thirty-five million population have four million more children than any urban group of equal size. City growth is largely due to the inflow from the country. Obviously, then, any religious force which is weak in the rural districts is at a serious disadvantage both in the city and in the country.

The Catholic Church in the United States is not at the source of population. A conservative estimate characterizes five-sixths of the Catholics of the United States as urban dwellers. Nine-tenths of our parish schools are in towns of more than twenty-five hundred population. Of course some of these serve farm children. But probably more than ninety per cent of our resources in personnel and equipment is employed in distinctively urban religious work. While our city parishes have grown, thousands of our country parishes and missions have dwindled away in the process. The reservoirs of a city may be full but the situation is disquieting if the well-springs of supply are rapidly drying up.

In regard to the rush of country folk to the city, it is important that clear thinking be done. There is nothing alarming in the mere fact that millions of country-bred people move to the cities. It is necessary that they should do so for there are millions more born on the farms than can possibly find profitable occupation there. There are about six and a half million farms in the United States, most of them being operated by single families. Until agriculture pays better than it does at present, it is unlikely that the total farm population will notably increase.

There are, however, certain conditions under which this otherwise normal movement of population becomes socially and religiously disastrous; namely,

1. If whole families of professionally trained farmers throw over their profession to become common laborers in the city. Only those who are wholly

ignorant of agriculture regard the farmer as an unskilled laborer.

2. If the majority of the more intelligent and capable boys and girls of each generation leave the farm for the city. No successful rural parish can be built on a population of dullards and incompetents.

3. If religious families abandon their farms to those without religion. The way to make America Christian, says Carver, is to make the Christians the best farmers. Their children will possess both city and country in the future.

The specific Catholic rural problem is to devise means to counteract these disastrous tendencies. It is the problem of building thousands of country parishes throughout the United States.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

The building up of ten thousand strong rural parishes in the United States will require adherence to a constructive program over a long period of time. If, however, we are to move in the desired direction, there are certain immediate steps which must be taken—due regard being had for the diversity of conditions in different sections of the country:

1. Clergy and laity should have an appreciation for the pivotal importance of the country parish, and the clergy and religious who are to minister to these parishes should have a sympathetic understanding of the profession of farming which forms the economic and social substratum of the rural parish. For this purpose diocesan and deanery

conferences should be held at which the subject should be competently discussed.

2. It should not be necessary for Catholic farmers to migrate to the city to give their children religious instruction. It is unnecessary to say that the parish school should be established when possible. But there is a vast number of places where it is not possible to establish parish schools, and where it will never be possible unless the religious education of the children is now taken care of. For these places the religious vacation school, which will provide religious education for a month of four hours a day and five days a week, is the immediate solution. There are seventeen thousand Catholic parish and mission churches in the United States; there are seven thousand parish schools, leaving ten thousand churches without parish schools as a field for the immediate establishment of religious vacation schools. During the past summer vacation schools were conducted in forty dioceses with a total registration of twenty thousand pupils. These vacation schools, with their complementary device, the religious correspondence school, are beyond the stage of experiment. The National and Diocesan Councils of Catholic Women are organized to assist in the rapid spread of these facilities for the religious education of children not attending parish schools.

3. The preparation of clergy for the rural parish should take into account the special problem of an agricultural population. The Curé of Ars gained the good will of a careless people by his ability to discuss intelligently with them their farming enter-

prises. Some general understanding of the rural parish should be imparted in the seminary, most effectively perhaps by the study group of the Students' Mission Crusade.

It must also be recognized that the best training for the rural pastorate is to be found in an assistantship under a competent rural pastor; for a city assistantship is not generally calculated to give either the understanding of or the sympathy for the farm which a rural congregation is entitled to expect on the part of its pastor. To provide such rural assistantships the combination of neighboring small parishes or missions under a competent pastor with one or more assistants is entirely feasible and has been successfully employed in several dioceses.

4. The country pastor has a wide opportunity for commending his ministry and improving his parish by promoting the economic and social conditions of his people. He is able to bring to his people the facilities placed at their disposal by the state agricultural colleges, and his lay organizations with his encouragement can hold agricultural institutes at practically no expense, utilizing the lectures and demonstrations by the extension department of the college. He will find the boys' and girls' agricultural clubs of great assistance. The establishment in our country parishes of coöperative savings and loan societies—"credit unions"—will be following the best experience of Catholic parishes in Europe, and will train the people in those Christian virtues necessary for the successful maintenance of coöperative societies so highly commended by Leo XIII and his successors in the Supreme Pastorate of the

Church. The Christian coöperative movement will assist materially in enabling the rural community, and consequently the rural parish, to hold a larger percentage of its capable and intelligent youth.

INTRODUCTION

"Back to the farm" has become a discredited slogan. Most well-informed persons are now aware that America has too many farmers and too large a yearly output of agricultural products. In this situation is to be found the chief cause of the long-prevailing, unprofitable level of agricultural prices. How to reduce the farm population and the annual output of farm products is, indeed, a baffling problem, but it falls outside the scope of this volume.

The problems which Dr. O'Hara discusses and, I think, solves, are more important than those presented by the current agricultural depression. They would be still actual and urgent if all our superfluous farmers were transferred to other occupations. They are mainly two: how to make farm life sufficiently attractive to prevent a decline in the proportion of Catholic country dwellers and how the Catholic clergy can most effectively promote this object.

Underlying these problems is the belief that the country is a desirable place for Catholics to live in. It provides the best conditions yet developed for rearing children, for maintaining pure family life, for economic independence and for general private ownership. The rural areas contribute much more than their proportionate share to the total popula-

tion. A given number of country-dwelling parents will have more descendants and through them exercise a larger social influence than an equal number of urban parents. To the extent that Catholics migrate to the city more rapidly than non-Catholics they render inevitable a decline in the Catholic population and its influence upon American life. If this book does no more than provoke general attention to this hitherto ignored fact and its significance, Dr. O'Hara will be well rewarded for the labor of composition.

While the means and methods set forth in these pages for making rural life more attractive and more fruitful present nothing strikingly new, they include all that has stood the test of experience and the scrutiny of recognized authorities. Very properly the author lays particular stress upon the value of culture and adult education. The ways and means by which the parish priest can lead and cooperate in improving the conditions of his rural flock are adequately and effectively set down. As one reads and ponders this part of the volume, one is tempted to venture the judgment that rural parish priests have it in their power to revolutionize Catholic country life economically, culturally, and spiritually.

JOHN A. RYAN.

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THE CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY
COMMUNITY

THE CHURCH AND THE COUNTRY COMMUNITY

CHAPTER I

THE CHURCH AND THE FARMER

There are two important reasons why the Catholic Church should be especially concerned with the interests of the American farmer. These reasons are: first, because the American farmer has a very special need of the Catholic Church; and second, because the Church has a very special need of the American farmer. The farmer needs the Church as every human being needs the Church for his own personal salvation; but he needs the Catholic Church in a more urgent manner than city people do because it can bring to bear important social forces to counteract the disadvantages of his isolated position.

The Catholic Church needs the farmer as it needs every other human being, to minister to him in the things that appertain to God; but it needs the American farmer in a more urgent way than it needs any other individual in this country, because the farmer occupies a quite singular position in regard to the increase of population to which the Church min-

isters. Let us view these two aspects of our subject briefly.

The farmer has the same fundamental needs as the city man; religion, health, education, recreation, fellowship, material well-being. All of these things come normally to human beings through the agency of social organization. It is organized society which makes these blessings available. We are so accustomed to the social framework in which we live that we take it for granted, as we do the air we breathe, and seldom become conscious of our indebtedness to it. Man is a social being, and his ordinary development will depend most largely upon his social relationship.

It is a matter of observation that the farmer gets less of all these things, which we have mentioned, from his social environment than does the city man. Why? Because the ordinary condition for social life is proximity to our neighbor, and that is the one thing which the farm lacks. In a city a school district may be organized in half a dozen blocks; a health clinic maintained in a small neighborhood; a library, a recreation center, a church, with hundreds, even thousands, of patrons, may be established, within a mile of paved streets. Under such conditions it is easy for social organization to function, and in the city organizations are multiplied. Now the most significant thing about rural life is the lack of effective social organization, and the reason is simple—because the social atmosphere is rare and only the strongest and most cohesive of social agencies can survive, not to speak of rendering effective service. This is primarily the reason why the

country needs the Catholic Church so urgently. Because the Catholic Church is the strongest and most cohesive social force known to history, it can render a social service to the sparsely settled countryside through a long term of years incomparably more important than any other agency.

The religious social service which the church can render the farmer can be seen in a glance at Europe. The only effective agency in binding together the social elements of the countryside is the church. When the church is not doing it, it is not being done. In a Belgian, a German, an Italian, or a Spanish rural parish, what social work the church is doing! Promoting the savings and loan societies, coöperative buying and selling, education and parish recreation centers, and all on a religious basis. And if this be the case in Europe, how much more important in America where social organization among farmers is far more difficult than in Europe. In Europe, for the most part, farmers live in villages, and some of the greatest difficulties in American rural organization, caused by long distances and bad roads, are altogether lacking.

In the United States there is no other social agency which can knit together the rural community as can the Catholic parish. At this moment Catholic rural parishes are doing much of the best community development work that is being done anywhere in this country—though nowhere are Catholic parishes in the United States approaching the social efficiency which they have reached in many countries of Europe. Religion, education, fellowship, health and finance are the needs of a community. In a

city you may conceivably have many different organizations promoting each of these things. In the country, population is sparse and over-organization comes soon. There must be integration of effort or all effort will be wasted.

The rural parish alone has the vitality to communicate life to these rural enterprises. The American farmer is in urgent need of the Catholic rural parish which is wide-awake to its social responsibilities and opportunities.

Let us turn now to the question, Why does the Catholic Church need especially to minister to the farmer? One soul is as important as another, and it would seem to be economy of effort to devote our efforts chiefly to the cities where it is easier to reach large groups of people and to leave the sparsely settled districts without care until we had thoroughly evangelized the cities. There is a specious reasonableness about this view as being only an application to religious endeavor of the principle of diminishing returns. There are, however, many objections to it. We shall here confine ourselves to the fundamental fallacy.

There are two ways in which the Church increases its membership; namely, by conversion and by births in Catholic families. Of these two, in any settled modern community, the latter is overwhelmingly the more prolific source of baptisms. One need not pause here to emphasize the importance of strengthening our missionary efforts. The fact remains that the Catholic home is the great nursery of faith. Religion is engaged in the work of character forming and childhood is the period of character forma-

tion. The stronghold of childhood must then be the citadel of the Church's hope. This would seem to be a point so insistently proclaimed by the Catholic Church in America with its parish schools that further discussion of it would simply be to labor the obvious.

But not so. There is one phase of the subject which is so far from being obvious that it is not yet generally apprehended even by religious leaders. And to call attention to it is to answer the question, Why should the Catholic Church urgently concern itself with the farmer? It is simply this. The farm in the United States is the stronghold of childhood. It is there that religious influence must be set at work if childhood is to be served. The overwhelming importance of the rural districts in this regard could be seen from the report of the 1910 census, from which it appeared that while fifty-three per cent of the population of the United States in 1910 was classified as rural, fifty-eight per cent of the school attendance was from rural districts.

But it was only when the 1920 census report appeared in 1921 that we were put in a position fully to apprehend the facts. The writer analyzed the census figures in an article in *America* (March 25, 1922), from which the following summary is quoted:

Speaking in terms of total population, although considerably more than one half of the total population of the United States lives in cities (1920), still there are in the rural districts 2,500,000 more children under ten years

of age than in the cities; so from the standpoint of natural increase of population the country is prolific and the city naturally tends to sterility. With the passage of time, institutions based upon a city population will be found to languish and institutions which are based upon the rural population will flourish as the bay tree beside the running water.

The only element of city population that is as prolific as the farm group is the first generation of foreign born. In the past the cities have grown from this source as well as from migration from the farms. But large accession from that source is now at an end with the more recent immigration laws. In the future the farms of the United States will be increasingly important as the source of population, and the Catholic Church must bring its ministration to the farmer if it is to influence city life largely in the future.

Population flows from the country to the city. Just as the city protects the source of its water supply to keep it wholesome and abundant, city Catholic parishes have a religious interest in maintaining strong rural parishes where a well-instructed and abundant Catholic population may flow each generation. The decline of the country parish will mark the decline of the Church in America.

Recent authors generally confirm the view we have just set forth.

A number of reasons have been assigned for this higher rate of child production in rural districts. The more significant of these appear

to be that (1) farming is a domestic occupation and is much dominated by home ideals and attitudes, which invariably include children. (2) In the country there is comparatively little social competition in consuming goods which tends to reduce the number of children per family. (3) A larger proportion of rural people marry, and they marry younger than is the case in cities. (4) It costs less to rear children in the country, partly because a child's labor on the farm makes him an economic asset after an age of eight or ten is attained. It may be remarked that all of these conditions are subject to change and that with the possible exception of the first the progressive urbanization of the country is reducing the effectiveness of these and other factors to maintain the high birth rate of an earlier day.

It is clear from a comparison of the rural and urban birth and death rates that natural population increase in the rural districts is much greater than that in the urban districts. For the period 1910-20 it has been calculated to be 7.6 persons per thousand for the urban and 15.2 persons per thousand for the rural, or approximately twice as great for the rural districts as for the urban districts. Clearly, if the country retained all of its natural increase it would not only soon outdistance the city in size and rate of growth, but the country would soon become seriously overcrowded from the standpoint of the demands of agricultural

industry. The greater portion of this natural increase does not remain in the country, however. From 1910 to 1920 the rural districts increased by only 1,599,871 persons while their natural increase plus three-quarters of a million immigration is estimated to have been 7,850,000 persons. Thus we have a quantitative estimate of the cityward migration during the decade. It amounted to about 6,150,000 persons and constituted 45.2 per cent of the total urban increase for the period. The comparative rates of increase and decrease for villages and open country indicate that the larger part of this migration came from the farms.¹

¹ *Handbook of Rural Social Resources* (University of Chicago Press, 1926), pp. 5-7.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF THE FARM

The historic rural handicaps have been isolation, drudgery, and lack of educational opportunity. All of these have been largely mitigated in our own memory. The improved roads, the automobile, the daily delivery of mail, the telephone, and now the radio have destroyed rural isolation. The advent of machinery has largely eliminated rural drudgery, and the consolidated school has brought much improvement to rural education.

Meanwhile new problems have arisen. There has been a rush to the cities which has alarmed many sociologists. The following table pictures the cityward movement of population:

URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES, 1880-1920

Class	1920	1910	1900	1890	1880
Total No.	105,710,620	91,972,266	75,994,575	62,947,714	50,155,783
Urban	54,304,603	42,166,120	30,380,433	22,298,359	14,358,167
Rural	51,406,017	49,806,146	45,614,142	40,649,355	35,797,616
Total %	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Urban	51.4	45.8	40.0	35.4	28.6
Rural	48.6	54.2	60.0	64.6	71.4

We must be on our guard against a misstatement of the menace inherent in this movement. The fact

that the city population has increased much more rapidly than the rural population during the past few decades is not in itself an evidence of the decline of agriculture. With the increase in the scientific knowledge of farming, and with improved machinery the production per man on the farm has increased materially with every decade. Consequently there need be no alarm concerning the food supply of the nation. Nor does the movement to the city of people trained for city occupations give any occasion for alarm. The country is too prolific to be under the necessity of keeping all of its population, and the inflow of healthy, vigorous blood from the country is the salvation of the city. The following table shows thirty per cent of urban growth due to rural migrations:

FACTORS OF URBAN INCREASE FOR THE UNITED STATES AS A WHOLE
1900-1910

Factor	Amount	Per Cent of Urban Increase
Incorporation	924,000	7.8
Immigration	4,849,000	41.0
Natural increase	2,426,000	20.5
Rural migration	3,637,000	30.7
Total	11,836,000	100.0

*Gillette, *A Study in Social Dynamics* (Amer. Stat. Assoc., Dec. 1916), p. 366.

The cityward movement does contain a danger in two circumstances: first, when those who have been professional farmers throw away their honored profession to become common laborers filling the labor

markets of industrial centers. This is a distinct loss to society. Second—and this may properly give cause for alarm—would be the rush to the city of all the most vigorous and competent of the rural population, leaving a deteriorated stock from which to replenish the city population of the future. Nothing can be more important from a national standpoint than to maintain unimpaired the physical, mental, and moral qualities of the farm population. Any deterioration in the rural stock means ultimately a deterioration in the whole people.

Another social problem which presents itself is the growth of tenancy. Much alarm has been expressed over the increase in the number of farm tenants and the decrease in the number of farm owners who operate farms. The disadvantages of tenancy are obvious. Ordinarily the tenant has not the incentive to keep up the productivity of the soil, or to care for the investment in buildings and equipment. If he is a short-term tenant, his natural inclination is to get all he can out of the farm and to put as little back as necessary; hence, the increase in the percentage of farm tenants is naturally a matter of grave concern. That such an increase is naturally to be expected must be evident from any study of the history of American agriculture. The reason why such a large percentage of farm operators have owned their land in the past is because they or their parents were able to secure the land from the Government for little or nothing. Much so-called farming in the past has consisted not in successful agricultural production, but in taking free land and holding it for the unearned increment. That method of

securing land is now at an end, and it can fairly be expected that the percentage of tenancy will increase unless social forces hitherto inoperative in America are called into play.

The increase of tenancy—in some states fifty per cent of the farmers are tenants—is due largely to enormous inflation of land values. This prevents access to land-ownership on the part of many who would desire it. High-priced land is bad for agriculture. It is good only for those who wish to sell out. The statesman who will devise a practicable means of stabilizing land values will merit a high place among the benefactors of his people. In our chapter on land ownership we indicate the historical Catholic solution.

Tenancy, however, may be a step toward land-ownership, as well as away from it, and for the future it may be doubted whether any other method of securing farms will be available on a large scale. Consequently, while every reasonable incentive should be employed to have farm owners operate their land when possible, our chief concern with tenancy should be to devise forms of tenancy and leasing which will permit the tenant to pass with as little difficulty as possible from the status of tenant to that of owner. It may be said, in passing, that our short-term method of leasing farms, so general in the United States, has many serious drawbacks.

Everywhere throughout the United States the farm laborer, the casual worker, is a great problem. Having no family ties he seldom enters into the life of the community. He is fortunate socially in his relations with the farm family, which ordinarily

treats him on the basis of social equality. Provision should be made so that, should he marry, he could enter into the life of the community, rear a family, and pass into the class of tenants and finally of owners. The best European practice, which has been copied in our farm-colony experiments in California, and which also obtains to a limited extent in various sections of our country, has been for the larger farms to provide a small acreage with a house to be rented by the married farm worker, who is thus enabled to cultivate his own land when not employed by others. His wife is also able to find seasonal employment in the home of the farm owner.

Much has been said in the past of the back-to-the-land movement. There would seem to be little in favor of sending city people without means and without farm experience out into the country. Their attempts are for the most part foredoomed to failure. It would be highly practicable, however, to maintain, in the large cities and in the ports of entry, bureaus which would enable immigrants and city folk of rural experience to establish themselves on the land as tenants under satisfactory conditions. The Jewish Agricultural Society has been able to place thousands of Jewish families on the land with every prospect of success. A similar organization could render a great service to Catholic immigrants who come from rural districts in Europe.

Much uninformed discussion frequently occurs concerning the health conditions of our rural population. There are, of course, rural slums, just as there are city slums—the rural slums caused by isolation, the city slums by congestion. The natural

advantages for health are with the country, whereas professional care of the health is a city development. We have been compelled to develop sanitary provisions in the city as a safeguard against the menace of contagion, and the habit of sanitary supervision has been carried over into all the concerns of health. One of the most important reforms in rural life will be the extension of health service to the country. No greater blessing can come to a rural community than a Sisters' hospital, and important beyond all else will be the establishment of maternity nursing care in every rural parish. We leave a fuller discussion of this subject to a later section.

We have said that economic forces work for the unity and advantage of the rural family. It must be confessed, however, that much remains to be done in the farm home to make it serve the convenience of the family. While we may view with great satisfaction the standards of living of rural America, there is, nevertheless, room and need for improvement in the devices which should be introduced for the convenience and privacy of home life: for instance, running water, safe lighting, and septic tanks. According to the 1920 census report, thirty per cent of all farms in the United States had autos and thirty-eight per cent telephones, but only ten per cent had running water piped into the house. Nine-tenths of the farm women have to haul water for cooking and washing from out in the yard. No wonder, when they visit their city cousins and witness the conveniences of a modern flat, that they go home to make unfavorable comparisons and urge the migration of the family to the city.

CHAPTER III

THE FARM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

The primacy of the family among social institutions is a Catholic first principle. The ideal home is the source of population and the nursery of faith and morals. Sanctity and indissolubility are its foundation and domestic unity the keystone of the arch which supports our Christian civilization. The impelling reason for the concern of the Catholic Church with rural problems is to be found in the special adaptability of the farm home to the production of strong, wholesome, Christian family life.

The most important distinction between farming and other industries lies in the fact that it provides not merely a means of livelihood but a mode of living. Like other industries it must face economic problems of production and of marketing. But unlike other industries it makes provision for family life, and that in an altogether unique way. The farm is the natural habitat of the family, and shares with that institution its claim to a central position in human affairs. To say that the farm is a home, as well as a business, is to make an important, but yet only superficial, statement. The real significance of the farm for civilization does not consist in its having a parcel of land set aside for human habita-

tion; cities have that. It consists in the fact that the industry of agriculture is essentially of a character to provide the natural environment for wholesome, vigorous, and prolific family life.

The first condition of wholesome family life is unity. The forces of modern industry threaten the family with disintegration. On the farm alone, among contemporary industries, the economic forces work for the unity of the home. Father, mother, and children are there engaged in the same intellectual interests, make the same social contacts. In the city the business man is away from his family; his occupation often is unintelligible to his wife and a mystery to his children. His business and social contacts are quite apart from his family life. The recreation of his children draws them into still other channels. On the farm it is different. The problems of production and marketing furnish a common intellectual interest to all the members; guests enjoy the hospitality of the whole family; and the children's pleasure is a domestic matter. One is not surprised, in view of these facts, to learn that divorce, the great menace of urban civilization, is very infrequent in the country.

Not only does farm life promote the unity of the home, but also it provides an economic setting in which children are an asset. On the farm there is a multiplicity of simple duties of brief duration which can be performed by almost the youngest children. Children are not capable of long, sustained efforts, either mental or physical, and are consequently unsuited for the industrial organization of cities, where tasks have become standardized, and

where no labor is profitable unless it conforms to the monotonous routine that the factory system marks out for it. The child labor laws are framed chiefly with a view to safeguarding city children from the monotony and drudgery that would stunt their bodies and their minds. As a result of industrial organization, city parents have the greatest difficulty in finding suitable employment for children of school age, although they recognize that enforced idleness is only less harmful to the child than industrial servitude. Thus it happens that, in the cities, children of school age are economically a liability, and are coming to be regarded by many city families, and even by professional social workers, as an expensive luxury sparingly to be indulged in.

On the farm it is altogether different. Additional children do not put the family to proportionately additional expense. Food for use in the home is produced in abundance, and even the small children are of service in caring for the poultry and the garden. When they reach the age of ten or twelve years, they find scores of occupations suited to their age and capacity, in which they play a productive part and, at the same time, themselves benefit by the work. Without any prejudice to their own interests children are an economic asset on the farm.

Obviously Catholic family life finds a congenial soil in the rural home. But how in the present state of agriculture are we to encourage intelligent Catholic young men and women to stay on the farm and establish homes? To answer that question will be the aim of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

WHY SHOULD INTELLIGENT BOYS AND GIRLS STAY ON THE FARM ?

It will be generally agreed by those who have followed our presentation of facts that Catholics should be vitally interested in building up strong rural parishes. To some, however, the obstacles seem insurmountable. In comparison with certain urban occupations agriculture seems hopelessly unprofitable. The rush of farmers to the city is taken as conclusive evidence that nothing can be done to anchor capable and intelligent men to the land until farming is made more lucrative. And since that task can scarcely claim the first efforts of religion, religious leaders have been discouraged about the future of the rural parish.

In another chapter we shall inquire what the church can properly be expected to do to help improve the economic position of the farmer. Here let us answer the question, What valid reason can the rural pastor lay before the intelligent boys and girls of his parish to induce them to devote their lives to the agricultural profession and to resist the powerful lure of the cities? To explore this question even slightly is to become convinced that the rush to the cities is due largely to other motives

than the mere desire of financial gain. Certainly the majority of farm families in the most distressing condition of agriculture are never reduced to the poverty which haunts the family of the city laborer who is out of a job.

The truth is that city life has been talked up and country life has been talked down for so long and by such a variety of seemingly unimpeachable witnesses (among whom may be numbered many estimable religious leaders) that many of our country boys and girls have come to believe that all things desirable for a full and wholesome life are to be found in the city, and obversely that none of these things are to be found on the farm. What we propose is to tell them the truth about the matter in the following wise: that the country far excels the city from the standpoint of the most important elements in complete and satisfying human life; namely, in the opportunity for self-employment and for the private ownership of productive goods, and above all for wholesome family life.

That the farmer is self-employed is a consideration of no small importance in rating the dignity of his calling. It is characteristic of agriculture that it is composed of small units, whereas other large industries, such as mining and manufacturing, transportation, and commercial enterprises, are large establishments with a few responsible heads and many employees. The vast majority of farmers are their own employers, and develop the qualities of successful employers; namely, initiative, foresight, and independence of spirit. There is no other large industry in which a man has an equal oppor-

tunity of becoming the head of an independent business. Professor Carver has well pointed out that there are two classes of people who will not be attracted to the farming profession. First are those who have a liking for speculative risks, who want to get rich quick and are willing to risk everything for rich prizes; farming will have no attraction for them. "Again, those who have little initiative—those to whom the question of what to do next is always a painful one—will always prefer industries where questions of this kind are solved for them by bosses, foremen, and superintendents." But men of courage, self-reliance, and resourcefulness will always find a special attraction in an occupation which allows them to be self-employed.

Of equal importance with the element of self-employment is the characteristic of farming which permits a wide distribution of private ownership. The Catholic Church has always encouraged private ownership of productive property as a source of security to the family and of stability to the nation. The great encyclicals of Leo XIII expatiate on its importance. It is unnecessary here to detail the advantages which arise from private ownership of such property; the sense of responsibility, of thrift, of independence are all fostered by it. There is no feature of American life more hopeful than the wide distribution of farm owners. In 1920 the farming industry of the United States was valued at nearly \$78,000,000,000, seventy per cent of which was clear of mortgage indebtedness. This represented more than six million farms containing an average extent of nearly

one hundred and fifty acres, and possessing an average value of \$12,000. The farming industry of the United States is in the hands of more than six million owners; and of these, about four million operated the farms as well as owned them, and even the two million tenant farmers were self-employed.

In the cities a few people own the means of production; the multitude are economically dependent; the few direct industry, and the multitude are employed by them. Only in the country has the average man a fair chance to taste the joys of economic independence arising out of the ownership of productive property. Only in the country does he generally have the exhilarating sense of being his own boss. These are facts regarding the relative accessibility of the practically desirable things of life in city and country. If rural pastors will present this picture to their people, they will furnish their intelligent boys and girls with a motive for staying in the profession of agriculture.

CHAPTER V

THE CATHOLIC FARM WOMAN

The indictment against the farm because of its supposed incompatibility with the best interests of its women folk has grown to impressive proportions as to volume even if not as to convincing quality. It is admitted that farms must be conducted in order to provide an ample supply of primary human necessities, but much commiseration is extended to the women who have to spend their lives in the farm industry. Truly a dark picture is painted of the farm woman's cramped outlook.

There is her isolation which prevents her from enjoying the alluring social round of her city sister; the lack of leisure which gives her no time to improve her mind; the absence of household conveniences which reduce her life to one of unspeakable drudgery; the want of creature comforts which renders her lot hard and uninviting; the monotony which springs from the unvarying stream of simple duties; the lack of amusement and recreation incident to distance from moving pictures and dance halls; the grime which is supposed to be a consequence of the absence of paved roads; and more distressing than all to a truly refined nature, the social inferiority which her rural environment inescapably

fastens on the farm woman. This disheartening picture is not really complete until it is set in the roseate frame of the city woman's enviable situation, no worry, no hard work, no discomforts, no grime, a life of ease, of culture, of refinement, of social distinction. What a contrast! Yes, what a contrast on paper! But where in the actual universe does either of the contrasted groups live? Nowhere. Simply nowhere.

It is certainly unnecessary to undertake to prove to anyone who has ever lived in a city that the city woman corresponding to the description given does not exist. Let us consider the farm woman.

It is true that labor-saving conveniences are not as common on farms as it is desirable that they should be. Running water and the application of power (with the supply of light) to housework are devices which have not been as extensively employed in the farm home as in the city home. Owing to the compact character of the city these things were more easily furnished to city dwellers. But the contrast is not essential and even at present is tending to vanish. There are many farm homes now as well equipped with these conveniences as are the great majority of city homes, and with the rapid development of rural engineering, especially in the application of electricity to farm needs, the farm woman will not be greatly handicapped in this respect. Besides, no small part of the farm woman's enjoyment will consist in progressively securing these labor-savers. One woman writes: "Half the fun of having 'things' is in working intelligently for them."

The Catholic Rural Life Conference proclaims that modern conveniences and labor-saving devices are "good things" and cherishes the ambition to promote their wider use in farm homes. It does not think that spiritual values are to be sought in unnecessary drudgery. It admits regretfully that not enough intelligent consideration has been given to improving the lot of the farm women in this respect. But it is convinced that the solution will be found not by intelligent women leaving the farm home, but by the courageous application of their intelligence to the problem.

But grant the present inconvenience of many farm homes as a disadvantage to be overcome. What is the other side of the picture? It would be well if all readers could have at hand the letters written by seventy-five farm women from various sections of the country in answer to the question, "Do You Want Your Daughter to Marry a Farmer?"¹ One emphasizes the partnership between husband and wife on the farm:

There is no other occupation where the work of the husband and wife is so clearly related and where success depends so much on their co-operation. They must use their judgment in planning their work, making their decisions and in their business methods. The farmer's wife has not only the opportunity of being a partner but of being a real business woman and companion to her husband.

¹ Collected and published by *The Farmer's Wife*, a magazine for farm women.

Another calls attention to the mother as teacher of her children:

In rearing her children, a farm woman has the advantage over every other woman. There are no distractions of city life to detract from her teaching. Even the "loneliness" of the country has its advantages.

Still another farm woman writes:

I want my daughter to bear hardships more bravely, not to be relieved of them; to meet difficulties more sturdily; to face motherhood as the "heritage of the Lord." I want her to help build a home in which children may grow, who will some day carry on the ideals and continue the service that I shall have to leave unfinished.

The Catholic farm woman will work for the material improvement of the farm home. But she should know that she occupies the position of advantage in regard to the essentials for womanly happiness and the fullness of Christian life.

CHAPTER VI

RURAL HEALTH

The Catholic Church has made an important contribution to the health program of American cities. The magnitude of this contribution is seldom fully understood. It is stated that more than half of the beds in general hospitals in the United States are to be found in Sisters' hospitals. In these hospitals are trained a large percentage of the graduate nurses of the country. Catholic medical schools recruit a very considerable number of physicians. What with laboratories, clinics, and dispensaries in nearly every city of importance the Catholic Church takes the foremost place among health agencies not supported by public funds.

There is, however, one feature of the health program of the Church which is disappointing; namely, that it is almost exclusively an urban program. That is to say, it ministers to that section of the population already best cared for by health agencies. There is no difficulty in understanding why this should be the case. Not only is the Catholic population chiefly centered in the cities, but what is of more importance for hospital work, the concentration of general population and the concentration of the medical profession in large

centers enables the highly equipped modern hospital to be self-supporting in the city far more readily than in the country.

While recognizing frankly the financial difficulty of carrying health work under religious auspices into the rural districts, the briefest survey of the situation will reveal the importance of such a service both to the health and spiritual welfare of the country people.

The general conditions which make for health are well known. They are chiefly direct sunlight, fresh air, lack of congestion of population, and freedom from nerve shock. In all these things the country has a vast advantage over the city, and as a result fundamental vitality of heart, lungs, and nerves will always be largely a country product. In cities plants, whether human or otherwise, tend to be of the hot-house variety. But notwithstanding the natural advantage of the country in this respect, it is a fact that the death rate per thousand in cities has been decreased until it is in some cases as low as, or lower than the death rate in the country.

Of course it must be observed that this lowering of the city death rate to the level of the rural mortality rate is only apparent, for the country has a much higher proportion than the city of the two age groups among whom mortality rates are naturally highest; namely, children under fifteen years and old folks beyond sixty-five years of age, whereas cities have their largest percentage of the intervening age groups. Consequently a balanced statistical record would still show the country as most productive of longevity.

Nevertheless the intensive application of a health program in the city and its almost complete absence in the country districts has deprived the country of a large part of its natural advantage. What is needed is to intensify the health program still further in the cities, but it is more necessary that we neglect no longer the urgent call of the farmer for health service. How urgent this rural need actually is may be seen either by noting the dearth of medical service in the country or by calling attention to the alarming presence of preventable defects among country children. First let us hear Dr. N. P. Colwell, secretary of the Council on Medical Education and Hospitals of the American Medical Association, in reference to the decline of the country doctor. He writes:

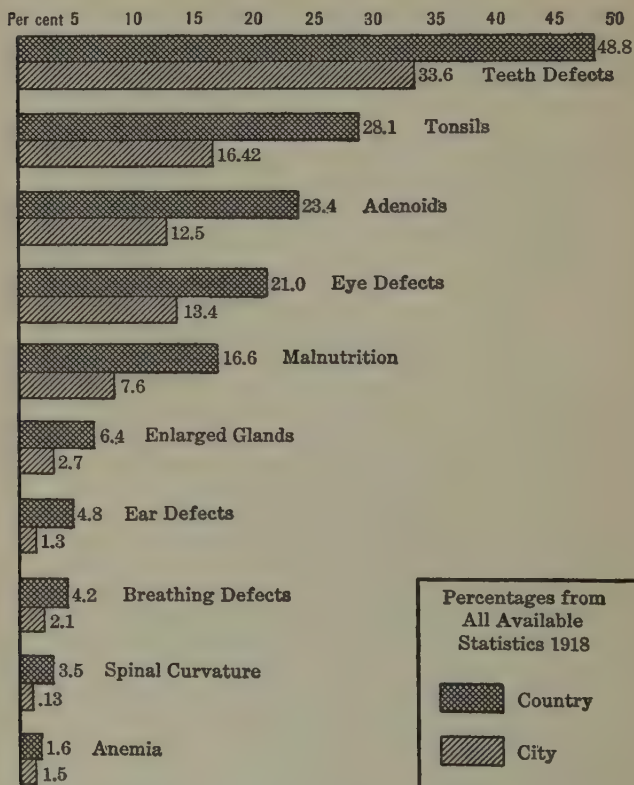
In brief, the objectionable features of country practice are loss of patients, loss of income, increased expenses, long drives, bad roads, hard work, poorer facilities for practice, no hospitals, no libraries, no laboratories, few churches, poorer schools, and loss of time or opportunity for professional or personal development. What wonder, therefore, that the country doctor after struggling for years against the rising tide of difficulties finally decides to follow his disappearing clientele to the city? Was it surprising that so many country doctors who entered the government service during the world war did not return to the country after they had obtained their discharge?

As to the distribution of physicians in the United States, a tabulation of urban and rural populations, based on returns from the Census Bureau for 1920, shows that, of the total physicians in the United States, 63 per cent are in cities of 5,000 or greater population. leaving only 37 per cent in cities or towns of less than 5,000. In other words, in cities of 5,000 or above there is one physician for every 541 people while in cities of less than 5,000 there is one physician for every 1,020 people. In an investigation for the state of Ohio, conducted by a professor in the Ohio State University recently, it was shown that in cities of less than 2,500 population there was only one doctor for every 1,600 people. The problem of country doctors, therefore, is one of distribution and not of total supply.

The consequences of this lack of medical attention are revealed in the greater prevalence of preventable health defects in country children in comparison with the extent of similar defects among city children. The situation is summarized in the following chart prepared by the Joint Committee of the National Educational Association and the American Medical Association.

From these facts it is evident that a great work lies open to any effective agency, such as a religious community of trained public health nurses, which would set itself to working in the rural districts, establishing hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries, and bringing a visiting-nurse service to the homes of the

people. Nor could any work be better calculated to commend the message of religion to the country population. Foreign mission societies are aware



of the importance of medical missions. There is ample field in the home missions for similar work.

Before closing this chapter reference should be made to a health activity that can be carried on by

the rural parish without waiting for the advent of trained religious workers as suggested in the above paragraph. Health is closely related to sanitation and the rural parish can be the effective agent of a progressive sanitation program. The subject is well covered in the Public Health Bulletin, No. 94, on *Rural Sanitation*¹ from which we quote:

One of the main ends to be attained by an intensive educational campaign for sanitation is the creation of adequate local health organizations. The people of the average community need to be educated to appreciate that money intelligently spent for the prevention of disease is money saved from loss in diminished earnings and in the care and treatment of the sick. They need to know that an efficient whole-time county health officer is worth to the community many times over the amount of his salary. At the present time many of our rural people are willing enough to expend money liberally to secure the best treatment available for their sick but will offer strenuous objections to a thoroughly reasonable expenditure of public money for the employment of a health officer to prevent sickness. Without an adequate local health organization to direct the work it appears that, in the average community, a reasonably good standard of sanitation will not be attained and maintained.

The need of advancement of rural sanitation is all too obvious even from casual observa-

¹ U. S. Public Health Service, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

tion. In the cruder matters of sanitation, such as the cleanly disposal of human excreta, the safeguarding of water supplies against contamination with filth, and the protection of foods from invasion by flies, most of our country homes are lacking. As a result of the insanitary conditions in our rural districts, thousands of our people every year needlessly die.

The rural parish which neglects to enlist its members in a health crusade is missing an important opportunity of service.

CHAPTER VII

RURAL EDUCATION

The rural problem can be stated in terms of education. It may be defined as the problem of building up a cultured rural society. In many circles there will be much arching of eyebrows at the very suggestion that tillers of the soil should be civilized men and enter into the possession of general ideas. The city attitude is expressed in the question, What have "rubes" and "hicks" to do with culture?

Indeed there are some who profess to be great friends of the farmer who think that no farmer should have more than a sixth-grade education. Their theory is that if the farmer should get a broader outlook on life he would cease to be a farmer. So for his own spiritual good, as well as for the permanence of a class who will produce food-stuffs for the city, he must be denied intellectual opportunity. This view is narrow, false, and essentially mischievous.

Quite recently when a speaker referred to the need of developing a rural culture someone facetiously observed that he supposed the speaker would want the farmer to carry a copy of Browning between the plow handles as he followed his plow about the field. The implication is not so funny as

he supposed. The most capable and most contented farmer whom the writer has ever known was well versed in the English classics and knew great sections of Pope's translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by heart. But the culture we are vindicating for the farmer is not a narrowly literary culture; what is here contended for is the understanding possession of general ideas.

Naturally the farmer's civilization should be related to the profession of agriculture. We are met at the outset with the charge that graduates of agricultural colleges rarely go back to the actual operation of a farm. What surprises one is that so many agricultural college graduates actually do enter practical farming. This is a subject which requires some accurate information and clear thinking:

First, only a comparatively small number of students in any so-called agricultural college are actually studying agriculture. Most of the students are in various engineering courses. Out of three thousand students in a typical agricultural college eight hundred are engaged in the agricultural course. Nearly half of these students go back to farming.

Second, agriculture is a vast industry, the greatest by far in the United States, and it requires a large body of experts: chemists, bacteriologists, county agents, boys' and girls' club leaders, mechanical experts, and journalists. These and a score of other related fields absorb the output of the agricultural college, and it is primarily to train these experts that the agricultural college properly so-called exists. That the college is doing its work well can be seen

from the increased efficiency of man power on American farms.

Third, as long as the vast majority of American farmers are lacking even a high-school education it is not reasonable to expect that agricultural college graduates will find themselves content in the social atmosphere of rural life. And this brings us to a consideration of our chief educational sin against agriculture. We have, generally speaking, no considerable number of high schools that are equipped to open to their students an intelligent understanding of the profession of agriculture. The next step—indeed the first step—toward a rural culture is a system of secondary schools in which agriculture is viewed as a profession worthy to be followed and not a drudgery to be escaped by every self-respecting and intelligent boy and girl. This does not mean merely the establishment of agricultural high schools where the course will center in the teaching of agricultural chemistry and biology, though such, of course, must be provided. But it does mean the maintenance of high schools where these courses are available, and where men and women are chosen as principals and instructors who are competent to train rural leaders. Such competence will ordinarily be possessed only by men and women who have been reared on the farm and have been graduated from an agricultural college. We say “ordinarily”—of course there will be found some exceptions to the rule.

Very fortunately the agricultural colleges are willing to serve the rural parish to the best of their ability, and progressive rural pastors all over the

United States are taking advantage of the opportunities which are offered, especially by the extension departments of the colleges, in organizing the boys' and girls' clubs and in conducting extension courses in the parish halls. In this way the lack of adequate rural high schools is being partially remedied. It should be borne in mind, however, that there is no satisfactory substitute for genuine rural secondary schools.

Here is an excellent field for our Catholic secondary boarding schools which cater to farm boys and girls. Our religious communities, which in a number of their schools are taking cognizance of this need, are true to their historic rôle in education, as well as sensible of the present pressing need of rural Catholic America.

Denmark has showed the way in the development of rural civilization. The folk-schools for adults in that country operate during seasons when the farmers can take advantage of the courses offered. These schools do not specialize in agriculture. They are for the farmers but have for their object the development of his capacity to grasp general ideas. That, we repeat, is the cultural need of rural society, without which it will forever be impossible to keep intelligent and capable boys and girls on the farm.

CHAPTER VIII

RURAL RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP

The first element in a Catholic rural program is the rural religious leader. The dignity of rural leadership must be recognized. This recognition will follow only from an appreciation of the critical importance of a rural Catholic population. The country pastorate will be invested with a new status. It will cease to be a place of exile for those who long for city positions, and instead of being a stepping-stone cityward it will be viewed in its true light as a post of honor and of achievement. The rural pastor will be an anchor for a rural Catholic population. He will be the center of a Catholic colonization program; he will warn his people against the allurements of city life and encourage them to build up a rural culture worthy of the historic profession of agriculture.

Not only is there need of a new status for the rural pastor but there is need, too, for the multiplication of rural religious communities both of men and of women. The rural districts of America from a religious point of view justify the etymological derivation of their name, heathen and pagan. A work of reconstruction in American rural life as vast and as honorable as that wrought by the Benedictines in Christianizing western Europe is await-

ing our rural religious communities. Cardinal Newman describes the work of this religious community in language that deserves to be quoted:

St. Benedict found the world, physical and social, in ruins, and his mission was to restore it in the way, not of science, but of nature, not as if setting about to do it, not professing to do it by any set time or by any rare specific or by any series of strokes, but so quietly, patiently, gradually, that often till the work was done it was not known to be doing. It was a restoration, rather than a visitation, correction, or conversion. The new world which he helped to create was a growth rather than a structure. Silent men were observed about the country, or discovered in the forest, digging, clearing, and building; and other silent men, not seen, were sitting in the cold cloister, tiring their eyes, and keeping their attention on the stretch, while they painfully deciphered and copied and recopied the manuscripts which they had saved. There was no one that "contended, or cried out," or drew attention to what was going on; but by degrees the woody swamp became a hermitage, a religious house, a farm, an abbey, a village, a seminary, a school of learning, and a city. Roads and bridges connected it with other abbeys and cities, which had similarly grown up; and what the haughty Alaric or fierce Attila had broken to pieces, these patient meditative men had brought together and made to live again.

American rural life cries out for a modern Benedict of Nursia. There is no substitute for the religious community as a vitalizing center for the Catholic rural community. The experience in Australia of a religious community of women who devote themselves to the religious instruction of children in the remotest country districts is full of significance for us in America, and the beginnings which have already been made of similar work in our own country should be encouraged and multiplied.

It was a realization of the need of developing rural religious leadership that led the Rural Life Bureau in the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference to call the first American Catholic Rural Life Conference in 1923. In answer to that call there assembled at St. Louis, Missouri, under the patronage of Archbishop Glennon, country pastors from fifteen dioceses. After three days of deliberation they concluded that the problems confronting them were sufficiently serious to warrant a permanent organization. Representatives from twenty-five dioceses met at Milwaukee in 1924. At this meeting the Conference took over the monthly publication, *St. Isidore's Plow*, enlarged its scope, and changed the name to *Catholic Rural Life*.

The St. Paul, Minnesota, meeting in 1925 witnessed an increased attendance, and the 1926 conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, resulted in a widening program in which the Catholic Students' Mission Crusade entered for the promotion of the study of this important problem of the Home Mission

field, and the National Council of Catholic Women undertook the development of the religious education program of the Conference. The Fifth Catholic Rural Life Conference was held at Lansing, Michigan, in 1927, jointly with the meetings of the American Country Life Association and the International Country Life Conference.

Meanwhile the national conference has begotten diocesan conferences in several states, notably in Maryland, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, and Oregon, in which states practically all of the dioceses have been represented in local rural life conferences. In a considerable number of cases these meetings have been held at the agricultural colleges. Deanery conferences on rural life have been held in a much larger number of states.

The diocesan conferences are the natural supplement to the national conference. The United States is a vast area and it is impossible for more than a comparatively small number of representatives to come to the national conference. Practically all the priests of the diocese can attend the diocesan conference. While the underlying problems are the same, the application of principles must vary according to circumstances. Consequently the diocesan conference can be more specific in its discussion than a national conference can be. It will be in the fullest development of both that prayerful thought will gather momentum for the accurate diagnosis and the effective solution of the Catholic rural problem.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOLS

Religious instruction follows the offering of Holy Mass and the administration of the Sacraments as the most imperative duty of pastors and the most urgent need of the faithful. Indeed, practically, it precedes all other religious obligations as the foundation of a home precedes the superstructure.

Now we in the United States are proud, and sometimes complacent in contemplating our parish-school system. We have a right to be proud of the accomplishment, but there is no ground for complacency. According to the 1927 official Catholic Directory there are seven thousand parishes with schools and two million children in the Catholic schools. That is magnificent. But there are according to the same official directory ten thousand other churches in parishes and missions with no Catholic schools and consequently with no children enjoying the advantage of organized Catholic education. Five thousand parishes with resident pastors have no parish schools.

The 1920 United States Census showed that one-fifth of the total population of the country was in school. Since Catholic families are at least as large as other families, there must be at least four million Catholic children attending school in the United

States. On that estimate about one-half of the Catholic school children in the country are in Catholic schools. There are two million Catholic children who are not receiving systematic instruction. Nor is there any immediate prospect that our schools will grow so rapidly as soon to include this group. A typical situation is disclosed by the annual school report of the diocese of Cleveland for the year 1926. In it Father Hagan points out that the increase of four and nine-tenths per cent in elementary school attendance is only slightly in excess of the normal rate of increase of population. He says: "It is evident that while we are absorbing our part of this increase, we are not making much headway towards taking into our schools the large proportion of our Catholic child population which is not now attending our institutions."¹

Consequently we cannot complacently await the time when all Catholic children will be gathered into our parish schools. Some way must be found, and should be found soon to bring relief to the two million Catholic children who are spiritually starving for systematic religious instruction.

One need not pretend to be able to suggest a complete solution for this most urgent problem. But one need have no hesitation in saying that religious vacation schools can be made to go a long way toward supplying this need. The religious vacation school is so far past the mere experimental stage that it can be confidently recommended as of inestimable assistance to the five thousand Catholic pastors

¹ p. 4-

who have no parish schools. The religious vacation school is not in any sense a substitute for a parish school. But to a parish without a parish school it is like a spring in a desert land where there has been no way and no water.

The religious vacation school has spread during the past five years to forty dioceses in the United States. It has enrolled thousands of boys and girls in the systematic study of religion where parish schools have been nonexistent. Everywhere the clergy, the Sisters, the people, and the children have been enthusiastic about the results attained. Typical testimonies from the Archdiocese of St. Louis were collected by Dr. Joseph P. Donovan, C.M., in an article in the *Ecclesiastical Review* for December, 1924, entitled, "Solving the Rural Problem in Missouri." Similar expressions could be quoted from every section of the country. The experiment has been successful, and the vacation school is now recommended as of practical application to several thousand parishes and missions throughout the United States.

While the central idea of the religious vacation school may be employed with great variety in method and detail, it is of importance that a certain general uniformity of program should be maintained. Without this no substantial progress can be made. In order to provide an organization which can be called upon in each diocese, the National Council of Catholic Women has accepted the invitation of the Rural Life Bureau to assist in promoting and organizing religious vacation schools on a national scale.

Though this work has great possibilities for city parishes, especially where there is no Catholic school, it has a special field in country towns and villages where there is no Catholic school. It can be maintained by a single teacher, but this is not recommended; very much better work will be done if at least two teachers are secured, who can provide for some grading of the pupils and for coöperation in promoting the work of the school. The months of June and July, after the public school closes, are in general the best time for the religious vacation schools, but local circumstances must be taken into account to determine the time when children can be assembled for the school.

It is of the utmost importance to have trained teachers—teachers who have training in pedagogical methods and experience in dealing with children.

Where possible, religious teachers should be secured; their familiarity with religious instruction, their experience in preparing children for the Sacraments, their knowledge of their religion, as well as the atmosphere created by the presence of consecrated teachers—all these things indicate the advantage of religious teachers wherever they can be secured. But lay teachers of experience and training can conduct the vacation schools with satisfaction, and there are many devoted Catholic lay teachers who will gladly give their services if their expenses are cared for.

In securing religious teachers arrangements must, of course, be made with the general superior, and full recognition must be given to the many demands on the Sisters' time during vacation; *i.e.*, retreats,

institutes, and needful recreation. The pastor or a local group should see to preparing the school facilities and to assembling the children.

PLACE OF HOLDING THE SCHOOL

(a) The church or rooms connected with the church will serve admirably for summer vacation schools. The availability of the Blessed Sacrament for devotions, of the organ for singing, and of the church grounds for recreation, will make it desirable in most instances to hold the school in the church or rooms connected with the church.

(b) In case a school building with blackboards and desks is available in the immediate vicinity of the church it may be secured and serve satisfactorily for the vacation school.

(c) Where neither church nor school building is available the children may be assembled at a home where two fairly large rooms can be placed at the disposal of the school.

ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL

(a) Under the direction of the pastor a local committee may be organized to promote the religious vacation school.

(b) Enrollment of children should be made on forms similar to those used in the parish or public schools.

(c) Funds for the school may be raised by tuition, or by other methods; but the teachers should not be burdened with the problem of finances, although they may receive tuition fees that the children bring.

(d) The grading of the school will be determined by the number of teachers whose services can be secured. No satisfactory results can be expected unless at least two grades are established in a group of children such as will ordinarily be assembled for religious vacation schools.

(e) Provision should be made for textbooks for the children to purchase, and reference books for the teacher.

(f) A definite curriculum and program of studies should be carefully outlined before beginning school, and carefully adhered to, except with such minor modifications as local circumstances necessitate.

Visits to the Blessed Sacrament will be encouraged, and standard devotions, as the Rosary and the Way of the Cross, will be explained, and the children will be encouraged to receive Communion during the term as frequently as practicable. Especial attention will be given to a general Communion once or twice during the term. At least one outing should be provided for, and closing exercises should be held, at which parents will be encouraged to be present. Credits should be given for attendance, application, conduct, and proficiency in the various subjects.

PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

The schools will start with Mass when possible, and close about noon each day.

The major portion of the morning's work will be teaching catechism and Christian doctrine, explanation of the Mass, Benediction, and other services of the Church, for which a series of prayers

at Mass and exercises has been printed. In addition the children will be taught the familiar hymns of the Church, suitable for the different feasts and seasons of the year. Sets of pictures or slides illustrating the different events in the life of our Lord and His Blessed Mother and other religious customs should be used to supplement this work.

For the recreational period, three different sets of programs are suggested for use according to the wishes of the pastor and the condition of the place: (1) A health program. (2) A series of simple sewing lessons. (3) Suitable games for boys and girls. These programs may be held each day or alternated.

TYPICAL DAILY PROGRAM

- 8:30—Mass. Congregational prayers. Congregational singing.
- 9:15—Prayers.
- 9:30—Christian Doctrine.
- 10:00—Recess. (1) Games, (2) Health Program, (3) Basketry, sewing.
- 10:30—Bible History.
- 11:00—Picture study. Lives of saints, lantern slides on the Mass, etc.
- 11:30—Singing.

SUGGESTED TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE BOOKS

1. Mass Prayers for Children.
2. Catechism—M. V. Kelly, C.S.B.
3. Liturgy, Sullivan—*Visible Church*.
4. *Little Pictorial Lives of the Saints*.
5. Schuster, *Bible History*.

6. Set of pictures and slides illustrating Christian truths.

7. Father Kelley, *Our First Communion and Mass for the Children*.

8. Josephine Brownson, *To the Heart of the Child*.

9. Miss Spencer, *Health Program for Catholic Schools*. (N. C. W. C. publication.)

10. Martha T. Speckman, *Brief Manual of Games for Organized Play*. (Revised edition, Children's Bureau Publication, No. 113, Washington, D. C.)

RELIGIOUS CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

The vacation school gives intensive religious instruction during the summer. It might be supposed that the Sunday School could be depended upon to supplement this instruction satisfactorily during the winter. But such is the case only in comparatively few rural districts in the United States. Sunday School itself must be supplemented; for owing to bad roads, bad weather, distance from church, chores to be done, and lack of adequate conveyance many country children do not get to Sunday School every Sunday. For these a program of religious correspondence instruction has been planned.

At the request of the Catholic Rural Life Bureau, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Victor Day of Helena, Montana, undertook the duty of supervisor of religious correspondence education. His correspondence lessons on the catechism have now been used in hundreds of parishes. Each lesson contains a suitable picture,

the story development, formal instruction, and questions. The more extended courses on the Creed and Sacraments contain about twenty lessons each. The plan is to send out these lessons, one a week, during the winter months. The papers are corrected either by the pastor, or as is becoming more generally the custom, at the mother-house of religious communities where Sisters who are superannuated for class work find an outlet for their zeal in directing the religious education of scores of families by correspondence. Diplomas are given for the successful completion of the correspondence course.

Objection is sometimes made that the teaching of religion is too personal a matter to succeed by correspondence. But it is the very merit of the correspondence lessons that they place in the hands of the best teacher, the mother, material with which she may give personal instruction to her children. The religious correspondence lesson is studied in the farm home by the whole family group under the supervision of the mother. Thus is strengthened the practice of family religious instruction.

CHAPTER X

FARMING AS A BUSINESS

Economically farming is classified among the primary or extractive industries, the business of which is to create wealth directly from the earth. The first source of all wealth, the extractive industries, stand in contrast to the secondary industries, which are engaged in manufacturing, transporting, storing, or merchandising goods, and to professional or personal services, whereby men get their living out of serving other men. The farmer serves an apprenticeship whereby he becomes possessed of the traditional knowledge which, during untold generations, has resulted from the observations and experiments of farmers. During the last half of the nineteenth century a revolution was wrought by the advent of new inventions, which have transformed farming very largely into a machine industry. It was the introduction of farm machinery which made possible the subduing of the great West in the lifetime of our fathers. Nowhere is machinery better adapted to its purpose of production than on the farm. The presence of machinery has resulted in establishing the moderate-sized farm as typical of American agriculture. For general farming the amount of land must be sufficient to employ economically the ordinary farm machinery.

Successful production involves the age-old problems of renewing the soil, a problem which resulted in the establishment in the Middle Ages of the three-field system of tillage, wherein a grain crop would follow a forage crop and the third year the land would be allowed to remain fallow. With the keener competition which modern transportation has brought about between farmers more attention has been directed to the economics of production, and experiment stations are maintained in connection with the agricultural colleges of all our states to bring scientific methods to bear on the experiments in this field. There are many uninformed city people who affect to despise the agricultural colleges and refer to them disparagingly as "cow colleges." As a matter of fact much of the best scientific work being done in America is being done in the laboratories of the agricultural colleges. At Cornell a million-dollar building houses the laboratories of the scientists engaged in the chemistry of dairy products. Notwithstanding the growth of city industry agriculture remains the first industry in importance in America, and the agricultural colleges with their experiment stations represent the largest and most fruitful practical application of science in America.

The farmer has learned that if agriculture is to be a business, it is not sufficient to produce; he must also sell his products. Heretofore he has been willing to let the city take care of his marketing problem for him, with the result that his business has been ruined. The general practice has been for the farmer to throw his entire crop on the market in

the three months following the harvest, and for the city marketing organizations to assume the responsibility of grading and storing, transporting and marketing the farmer's product. The many disadvantages in this system have become apparent. It is the reverse of the procedure of the prudent and successful manufacturer, who standardizes his product, and avoids as best he can the glutting of the market.

It is the disadvantage of the small unit of production, characteristic of farming, that each farmer cannot profitably undertake for himself all of those operations which are practicable in the extensive production of manufacturing industries. But the farmer has now realized that what he cannot do individually he may be able to do coöperatively, and the movement for coöperative marketing, which so revolutionized the agriculture of Denmark, is now growing apace in our own country. Out of a total of nearly six and one-half million farms, only a little over half a million—less than eight per cent of all—reported in 1920 marketing through farmers' coöperative organizations. The last few years have witnessed a tremendous expansion in the field of agricultural coöperation; but a great deal of education will be required before the movement can make great permanent headway, for coöperation requires much social virtue, and must be stimulated by a great sense of thrift.

In the discussion of the agricultural industry emphasis is alternately shifted from scientific production to coöperative marketing, both of the utmost importance in successful farming. Very often, how-

ever, overemphasis of these elements leads to a neglect of appreciation of farm management as of prime importance in successful agriculture. Farm management means the economic administration of land, labor, and equipment; and the neglect of this element on the farm is as fruitful of disaster as it is in city business. Many farms have been wrecked by the purchase of high-priced machinery unsuited to actual needs and by the production of crops for which no satisfactory market could be found. The problems of farm management call for the exercise of much prudence and foresight.

Farming will be a much more successful business if it be borne in mind that it is not primarily a business at all. As we have indicated, farming is primarily a mode of life, and only secondarily a commercial business. Its ultimate success will be secured by producing for the family living on the farm, instead of producing an agricultural specialty and buying the necessities of life for the rural home. For the agricultural industry as a whole diversified production and a self-sufficing economy is the far-seeing policy. Nothing could be socially more fatuous, as a general policy, than to buy from a remote market the food supplies for the household, when it would have been possible to produce the food supplies at home, save the transportation charges and have more wholesome provisions.

CHAPTER XI

CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES OF LAND OWNERSHIP

In his great encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Leo XIII laid down the fundamental principles of Catholic rural social science. Treating of the provision which the father of a family should make for the welfare and security of his children the Pope pointed out that suitable independence could be achieved only by the private ownership of lucrative property. He wrote:

That right of property, therefore, which has been proved to belong naturally to individual persons, must in like wise belong to a man in his capacity of head of a family; nay, such person must possess this right so much the more clearly in proportion as his position multiplies his duties. For it is a most sacred law of nature that a father should provide food and all necessities for those whom he has begotten; and, similarly, nature dictates that a man's children, who carry on, so to speak, and continue his own personality, should be by him provided with all that is needful to enable them to keep themselves honorably from want and misery amid the uncertainties of this mortal life. Now in no other way can a father

effect this except by the ownership of lucrative property, which he can transmit to his children by inheritance.

Further on in the same encyclical letter the Pope returns to the provision for family life, and insists upon the necessity of the widespread ownership of land for the well-being of society and the family. He also insists that the laws of the state should promote the diffusion of ownership. He writes:

We have seen that this great labor question cannot be solved save by assuming as a principle that private ownership must be held sacred and inviolable. The law, therefore, should favor ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the humbler class to become owners.

Many excellent results will follow from this; and first of all, property will certainly become more equitably divided. For the result of civil change and revolution has been to divide society into two widely differing classes. On the one side there is the party which holds power because it holds wealth; which has in its grasp the whole of labor and trade; which manipulates for its own benefit and its own purposes all the sources of supply, and which is even represented in the councils of the state itself. On the other side there is the needy and powerless multitude broken down and suffering, and ever ready for disturbance. If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the consequence will be that

the gulf between vast wealth and sheer poverty will be bridged over, and the respective classes will be brought nearer to one another. A further consequence will result in the greater abundance of the fruits of the earth. Men always work harder and more readily when they work on that which belongs to them; nay, they learn to love the very soil that yields, in response to the labor of their hands, not only food to eat but an abundance of good things for themselves and those that are dear to them. That such a spirit of willing labor would add to the produce of the earth and to the wealth of the community is self-evident.

Aristotle had pointed out in his *Politics* that the well-being of the state required this policy. He wrote, "Make even the poor owner of a small inheritance." Catholic philosophy as expounded by Leo XIII goes further and lays emphasis on the well-being of the family and the great advantages that come to family life from the ownership and operation of possessions in land.

In the history of land tenure a twofold evil has arisen against which Catholic philosophy inveighs; namely, the "pulverization" of land holdings to the point where the acreage is no longer capable of providing sustenance for a family, and on the other hand the development of "latifundia," which is the name given to vast estates managed as simple units. The process of pulverization, due chiefly to the subdivision of farms among several children until the holding of each was too limited to maintain the

owners except in the direst poverty, has been a historical development in a number of countries. The words of Pope Leo that we have quoted above are more directly aimed against the development of latifundia. Miss Helen Douglas Irvine in her very able book, *The Making of Rural Europe*, devotes a chapter to the development of latifundia in mediaeval and modern times. She writes:

The mediaeval and modern latifundia represent not a survival, but one of the forms of the decadence of estates made up of the small holdings of tenants, the landlord's demesne, and the commons in which the rights of tenant and landlord mingled. When such an estate, or a large part of it, became a latifundium, the extremity of the landlord's victory over the tenant community and the tenant households had been reached. The tenants had not merely been oppressed; they had been suppressed. As tenants they no longer existed although some of them might survive as paid laborers. Every right of property and direction had been concentrated in the landlord.

This is a description of a very ancient evil. It was condemned in Jewish history by the prophet Isaias when he wrote, "Woe to you that join house to house and lay field to field even to the end of the place" (Isaias v. 8). In ancient Athens the crisis which confronted Solon had been brought on by the impoverishment of the tenants, who had been forced to pledge their bodies to servitude for debts to their landlords. "Each of the Greek states," says Plato,

"is not really a single state but comprises two; one composed of the rich, the other of the poor."¹

M. Fustel de Coulanges observes that the Greek states were always fluctuating between two revolutions, the one to despoil the rich, the other to reinstate them in the possession of their fortune. In the earliest and happiest days of Rome land ownership was widely distributed among small holdings—a situation which Montesquieu regarded as the essential condition for a good democracy. But with the increase of military power and of political corruption the land drifted into the hands of a few, and the small farmers and tenants were crowded to the wall. Notwithstanding the agrarian reforms which filled the history of the later republic, the encroachment of the large estates, the development of the *latifundia* reduced the tenants to beggary and destitution and undermined the republic. The conclusion is summed up by Pliny in a sentence: *Latifundia perdidere Italiam*.

The development of *latifundia* in England was adverted to by Sir Thomas More, in his *Utopia*, in the following language:

Therefore that one covetous and insatiable cormorant and very plague of his native country may compass about and inclose many thousands of acres of ground within one pale or hedge, the husbandmen be thrust out of their own, or else either by cunning and fraud, or by violent oppression, they be put beside it, or by wrongs and injuries they be so wearied,

¹ *Republic IV*.

that they be compelled to sell all: by one means therefore or by other, either by hook or crook, they must needs depart away, poor, silly, wretched souls, men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woeful mothers with their young babes, and their whole household small in substance and much in number, as husbandry requireth many hands. Away they trudge, I say, out of their known, accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in. All their household stuff, which is very little worth, they be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought.

The same evil spread over Europe. Between 1660 and 1873 half of the land of the Roman *campagna* formed some seven properties of more than ten thousand acres and seventy per cent formed properties of more than five thousand acres. All these latifundia were let to middlemen who paid fixed rent to the landlords and made all the profit they could for themselves. The descendants of ancient cultivators lived hardly here and there on the hill-sides, leaving the plains to the shepherds. Southern Italy presents a similar situation, which engaged the earnest attention of the Catholic Popular Party.

Of the development of latifundia in Spain Miss Irvine writes:

Whole villages disappeared; others from populous and prosperous became wretched hamlets; wide tilled areas were abandoned to waste. The great southwestern districts of Estremadura and Andalusia became and have

remained a country of undeveloped pasture lands, owned in large estates by landlords whose sole interest in their property is in their rents. They let to farmers who make what profit they can during the term of their lease. In the Estremaduran province of Caceres in 1914 twelve landlords owned 230,116 acres, so that the average hold of each—invariably farmed as a single unit—was 19,176 acres. This province is called the typical district of large pasturelands held by owners who are absentees and attend to their property only for the purpose of receiving their rents. It is a cattle country par excellence, with a privileged climate and good soil, and yet artificial meadows are hardly known in it.

The history of the Irish absentee landlord is well known, but it is not so well known that the Scottish Highlands suffered in like manner by the establishment of latifundia as a part of the "pacification" program of the English government in the last century. The above quoted author writes:

In many districts the crofters were brought to extremest want and were hardly kept alive except by charity; to collect full rents from them was outside every bound of possibility. It was at this time that a considerable number of Highland lairds took the step of turning crofters off their land and including the crofts in large sheep farms. The evicted tenants recruited the industrial population of Glasgow, or crowded miserably in small towns and coast

villages, or, in large numbers, they emigrated. A little later some landlords discovered a new expedient for realizing the value of latifundia, in that they added the lands of former crofts to their deer-forests which they were able to let for fantastically high rents. The wrongs of the evicted tenants caused a scandal which led to the Crofters Holding Act of 1886 and to subsequent statutes, all more or less effective checks on further unjust evictions. But perhaps because the flow of emigration was now mainly spontaneous, the depopulation of the Highlands continued as it still continues, and the latifundia expanded.

The story of the latifundia is not without interest to American students of agriculture who have witnessed the rapid growth of tenantry in the last third of a century in America, and with the increasing price of land the greater difficulty of the average farmer in securing access to landed property. Certainly the capitalistic regime under which agriculture is conducted cannot easily be reconciled with historic Catholic principles. In this connection, let us quote in conclusion two paragraphs from *The History of the German People*, by Johannes Jannsen:

Among manual industries none stood higher in the estimation of the canon law than agriculture. It was looked upon as the mother and producer of all social organization and all culture, as the fosterer of all other industries, and consequently as the basis of national well-being.

The canon law exacted special consideration for agriculture, and partly for this reason, that it tended in a higher degree than any other branch of labor to teach those who practiced it godly fear and uprightness. "The farmer," so it is written in *A Christian Admonition*, "must in all things be protected and encouraged, for all depend on his labor, from the Emperor to the humblest of mankind, and his handiwork is in particular honorable and well-pleasing to God. Therefore both the spiritual and the secular law protect him."

German secular law was just as much the protector of labor, of its rights and its dignity, as was the Canon Law. It recognized in it an independent means of producing property. It laid down, for instance, the pregnant principle that those individuals have a claim on the "fruits" who have bestowed the necessary care and culture to produce them, and that everywhere where a right to the improvement of land existed, every increase of value which is the result of labor should be to the profit of those who have brought it about. *From this view of the property in improvements it followed that the property originally let out to farmers gradually became their own possession, while the rights of the ground-owner dwindled down to a mere liability of the property to certain services and dues.*²

² Vol II, pp. 96, 97. (Italics ours.)

CHAPTER XII

RURAL COÖPERATIVES

It is often asserted that the solution of the agrarian problem is to be found in the development of rural coöperative enterprises. This is, of course, true in the wide sense that rural civilization must depend for its advancement upon the intelligent collaboration of country dwellers. It is, however, in a much more restricted sense that coöperative enterprises are usually lauded. It is generally implied that by forming coöperative buying and selling organizations the farmer will be able to get adequate financial return for his labor and investment. Such a statement does not express a well-balanced judgment. It overemphasizes the economic benefits of coöperation and entirely neglects its social and moral consequences.

It is perfectly obvious that coöperative enterprises can furnish the farmer with powerful economic leverage. In buying he can avail himself of the advantage of wholesale prices. In selling he can sort, grade, and process his products, and put them on the market when and where it is to his advantage to sell. It is conceivable that a coöperative enterprise might get control of an essential food product and raise the price at least temporarily as arbitrarily

as industrial monopolies have been known to do. However, with the farmers of all the other nations of the world as potential competitors, such an abuse of power by a farmers' coöperative on any important scale is just conceivable; it is not a practical danger.

But the creation of these rural coöperatives is not so simple as it may seem. It presupposes certain moral qualities among farmers which are not conspicuously present in any group of human beings; namely, a spirit of coöperation, willingness to be satisfied with small gains, and loyalty to competing neighbors. Without these dispositions coöperatives may be launched in times of stress but they will not persevere. Recent history in this country reveals a high mortality among farmers' coöperatives. The post-mortem diagnosis is usually inefficient management. But back of that expression are concealed the seeds of dissolution which were present when the organization was instituted, in the form of individual selfishness and mutual distrust.

But the twelve thousand farm coöperatives now active in the United States involve moral prerequisites for their financial success. What is more to the point, their success is not to be measured merely or even chiefly in terms of economics. These associations will undoubtedly save the farmers hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is surely important. But what is more important is that they will save the social and intellectual fabric of the farmers' civilization.

There is no true civilization without community effort. Culture is the flowering of community spirit.

The lack of it in the country has been due to the excessive individualism of the farm. Coöperative enterprises promise to build up real rural communities by creating common bonds of interest. When farmers work together, perhaps they will play together. Their recreation will be socialized if their business is socialized. The coöperative movement will be justified by its social as well as by its economic efforts.

Not only so. A weakness of rural life in the past has been its intellectual poverty. The city has absorbed all the intellectually stimulating features of agriculture. It took the farmer's product from him and made provision for finance, transportation, and marketing. All of these elements which open up world views were undertaken by the city, leaving to the farmer only to till the soil and fatten his live-stock. The coöperative movement makes the farmer a partner in a vaster enterprise. His mind is opened to new problems. He studies transportation and finance and world markets. A new horizon is opened to him. He feels that he is not shut out from the intellectual interest of the city business man, of whom he has stood in envy and in awe. Capable and intelligent farm boys and girls will have new incentive to remain on the farm. The coöperative movement, in a word, will help greatly to make farm life intellectually satisfying.

It is no mere accident that the effective Catholic rural organizations in Europe and Canada are intimately interwoven with coöperative enterprises. For coöperation is a Christian mode of industry. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so ye shall

fulfill the law of Christ." In removing destructive competition, mutual distrust, and individual selfishness, religion will have an effective aid in coöperative organization. Through these organizations religion can work for the moral development of the community, and through them the community is allowed to function in a Christian manner.

The benefits and the limitations of the coöperative movement are detailed from the standpoint of a European observer by Helen Douglas Irvine in her recent book, *The Making of Rural Europe*.¹ Especially noteworthy is her observation concerning the evils which developed among the peasantry on the breakdown of the earlier communal life which contained the spirit if not the form of the best modern coöperatives. She writes:

The extremely important purchasing societies supply the smallholder with all farming requisites, which they procure in the best markets, and in large quantities and therefore cheaply. The benefit of such convenient provision of seed and fertilisers and implements and other requisites, of good quality, in good condition and at low prices, is hard to exaggerate.

In these and some other less general ways coöperation equips the peasant to be the rival on equal terms of the capitalist farmer. It goes further when it makes him a co-lessee of land, which is farmed by his society collectively, or divided into small holdings distributed among the members. There are a few instances of coöperative enterprise of this kind in France,

¹ London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

in Hungary, and in the Balkans, but the experiment has been most extensively tried in Italy, where it has met with considerable success.

Coöperation does more than strengthen a smallholder's economic position. It makes his life wider, less monotonous, and more evidently important. There is a type of peasant whom Zola and Guy de Maupassant have made familiar, and whose predominant qualities are grossness, avid greed, perfect selfishness, and poverty of ideas. An isolated life of unremitting toil, very near the beasts and the soil, and the painful accumulation of small gains, have in truth developed this type, certainly not universally, yet with some frequency, among the peasants of Europe. But there is ground for believing that its existence is mainly a result of the weakening, in modern times, of the communal life of households and villages. There could and can be no such peasants in the great patriarchal families which once composed nearly the whole of rural society. They can hardly have been common in the mediaeval and post-mediaeval rural communities which corporately transacted a variety of administrative and agricultural business. At the present time such peasants are a byword in France, but they are far more characteristic of France, where property and society were suddenly individualised at the Revolution, than of Italy, where the joint life of composite families and the communal life of villages have partly survived.

Coöperation checks and corrects this tendency of peasants to over-individualism, as it

makes their lives less dull. The interest of managing an active coöperative society, the possibilities of new work, new gains, and new losses which it opens up, the sharing of its direction, its gains, and its losses: these things are a very rich addition to the life of any country village.

But there are dangers to be guarded against. The author writes further:

Against these benefits of coöperation—its economic and its social and moral benefits—some drawbacks must be set. There is first a certain dullness which itself induces. The tendency of coöperation is to specialise farming. Thus, the coöperative dairy farmer no longer makes cheese or butter; he no longer fattens pigs on skim; he no longer hawks his milk in the nearest town; probably he buys much of his cows' fodder from the supply-society rather than grow it. His function has been simplified: the work and the skill of his household are less varied than were those of his father's household. He is still far above the artificer reduced to the factory hand, whose function has come to be performed by a single repeated muscular movement, yet he is one step nearer that degradation than his father. Sometimes a coöperative dairy-farmer will contemplate ruefully the old disused churn with which his mother made butter renowned over a valley.

Moreover, while this specialisation has

increased the food-supply, it leaves certain by-products, once utilised, to go to waste. On an old-fashioned small mixed farm nothing needed be wasted. But the highly specialised dairy-farmer has no use for his skim. The corn-grower who saves a team of oxen by using the coöperative society's motor-tractor has to buy so much more manure. The cocks and hens which used to pick up a living in every brick-yard are concentrated by the specialised poultry-farmer who feeds them on bought food.

Another and a grave objection to coöperation is its tendency to drain the best foodstuffs out of the district in which they are produced to a distant and profitable market. Thus the Ayrshire and Lanarkshire milk goes to Glasgow by way of the coöperative depots; the Orkney farmers sort their eggs into the big for the coöperative society and the small for themselves and their families. Coöperative smallholders tend not to produce for their own needs and those of their households in the first instance. They are unlike all the smallholders of all past ages in that there is a tendency among them to produce, in the first instance, goods for sale. With the money they receive from the coöperative society they buy the food they still need because the society has absorbed so much of their produce, and often their choice falls on the cheap preserved and imported foods. There is a glaring instance of this procedure in Ireland, where the excellent home-fattened bacon and ham are habitually exported

to America by the coöperative societies, and the farmers buy, to take their place, maize-fed bacon imported from America. Two losses are involved: a loss to the Irish peasants of the extra nutriment in the flesh of their own pigs, and a net loss to the world at large represented by the cost of transporting Irish bacon to American mouths and American bacon to Irish mouths.

CHAPTER XIII

FINANCIAL COÖPERATIVES

The development of rural coöperative enterprises in buying and selling is regarded by many as the key to the agricultural economic paradise. While this movement will be of immense economic value to the farmer, it should not be presented merely as an economic program, for two reasons: first, because it would raise extravagant expectations of material gains from this source; and secondly, it would tend to becloud the vast social, cultural, and moral benefits of coöperation—benefits which would justify coöperation apart from more material gains.

The rural program of the Catholic Church abroad throws important light on the weakest spot in the farmers' economic life and on the suitable remedy. It is the millstones of finance that have caught the farmer in their tender embrace. And not until the farmer gets a voice in the management of this financial mill, will it let him be free and even grind grist for his consumption. This voice in the control of credit he has secured in a number of countries by the establishment of coöperative rural savings and loan banks—coming to be known in this country as rural credit unions.

In Europe the money-lenders had the peasants in

their clutches. In more than one European country the organization, under Catholic auspices, of rural credit unions broke the control of the money lender and liberated the peasants.

The Catholic rural movement in Europe is based on a recognition of the importance of financial independence for the farmer. In thousands of country parishes or groups of parishes the coöperative savings and loan society is organized. In Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, and Spain, to speak only of the countries where most progress has been made, these local savings and loan banks are affiliated so as to form great provincial and national banking systems.

There has been published the report of the coöperative savings and loan bank of Belgium's Catholic Farmers' Union rendered April, 1926. It shows the deposit of six hundred and fifty million francs, which in turn has been loaned to the members at a reasonable rate of interest to develop their agricultural productivity.

Thirty-five years ago the Abbé Mellaerts had studied the operation of the Raiffeisen banks among the farmers of the Rhineland. He introduced the idea to the impoverished parishes of Belgium at a meeting at Louvain in 1890 and established the Belgian Farmers' Union. During the month of May, 1926, fifty thousand members of that now powerful Catholic Farmers' Union of Belgium paraded through the streets of Louvain and passed before the reviewing stand where practically all the bishops of Belgium assembled to do homage to their founder, the Abbé Mellaerts.

The story of the coöperative savings and loan banks as operated under the auspices of Catholic rural organizations in Europe and in Canada is commended to all who wish to know by what practical means Catholic country parishes can improve the economic condition of their members. These banks are only the mainstays in a vast network of coöperative action, including purchasing and marketing agencies of the most varied character, from extensive warehouses to the distribution of electricity; from the purchase of fertilizer to the community library and theater.

The American adaptation of these coöperative savings and loan banks is to be found in the rural "credit union."

A credit union is a bank, but a unique sort of bank. To begin with, each credit union is limited in the scope of its operations to a specific group of people, such as the employees of a factory, store, mill, the members of a society, a profession, a trade, the members of a church parish, those living within a well-defined rural district, small community, or neighborhood, etc. To become a member of a credit union, therefore, one must first be a member of the specific group within which the credit union in question operates. Membership is predicated on an agreement to buy one share at a par value of five dollars, payable in cash or in regular installments of twenty-five cents, payable generally on a weekly or sometimes a bi-monthly or even a monthly basis. The word "share" in a credit union, however, has no further significance than to afford a basis for membership. As a thrift plan the pur-

pose of the credit union is to induce the individual member to save periodically to the limit of his saving capacity. The unit of savings is purposely very small, and the credit union is vitally concerned to assist the member who can save but little, at the same time affording a ready method for saving to the member who can save a more appreciable amount. If, for example, the member can save fifty cents a week, he subscribes to two shares, paying twenty-five cents a week, in the average credit union, on each of them. If he can save two dollars a week, he subscribes to eight shares, paying in twenty-five cents a week on each share. If, however, he can save but twenty-five cents a week the credit union is equally as eager to be of service to him. It is appreciated in a credit union that by the time the member has paid in installments for his first share or shares, he will have acquired the habit of saving and will go right on indefinitely saving additional shares.

In this fashion money is, of course, accumulated much more rapidly in fact than one would imagine to be possible.

The second phase of credit-union service is concerned with the use to which this money is devoted. Credit unions may make loans to their members at reasonable rates of interest for any provident purpose. A provident purpose has been interpreted to mean that the loan must promise, to the best judgment of the credit committee, to be of benefit to the borrower. Credit unions, therefore, make not only remedial loans, but constructive loans as well.

Each credit union is managed by a board of direc-

tors, a credit committee and a supervisory committee, chosen by and from the membership in elections in which each member has a single vote whatever his shareholding. The board of directors, in turn, chooses, by and from its own membership, a president, a vice-president, a clerk, and a treasurer who is the general manager.

The St. Jean Baptiste Parish Credit Union of Lynn, Massachusetts, is a typical parish credit union and serves four hundred and ten of the parishioners of the St. Jean Baptiste Church of that city.

Usury is the normal result of a combination of two circumstances—a need for credit coupled with a breakdown of normal credit facilities—and it exists because relatively few people have available for their use in time of need credit resources at legitimate rates of interest. Whether usury is disclosed as a practice which prevents the small farmer from getting his seed, or his fertilizer, or the other necessities of his business without paying an exorbitant rate for money borrowed for that purpose, or whether it is uncovered as a great social evil practiced on wage workers in cities, it can be eliminated only by the creation of credit for those who need credit and who, when without credit resources at normal rates, do business with the usurer at abnormal rates.

The American farmer has been placed in a much better position than his European cousin by our several governmental farm-credit agencies. Nevertheless, there is undoubtedly a place in this country for coöperative institutions of saving and credit.

The first credit-union law in this country was

enacted in Massachusetts in 1909, and there have been credit unions in that state for eighteen years. Despite the fact that the War and the difficult period which followed the War interrupted the normal credit-union development in the United States, since the first enactment in Massachusetts, laws similar in kind have already been enacted in twenty-four states. While the credit-union development in the United States has been primarily urban and a development of wage workers, a credit union law in North Carolina in 1915 has had an almost exclusively rural significance, so that there has been some experience with the credit union in this country even as applied to rural conditions. Other credit-union development in Canada, associated with the name of Desjardins, preceded the pioneering work in the United States.

Alphonse Desjardins was born in Levis, Quebec, in November of 1854; he was graduated from Levis College in 1870, and entered the field of journalism.

It was the deplorable revelations brought about by lawsuits in Montreal and elsewhere, where poor borrowers had been obliged to pay to infamous usurers rates of interest amounting to several hundred per cent for the most insignificant loans, [he writes in his book *The Coöperative People's Bank*] that induced the writer to study carefully this problem with the view of finding out the best possible solution.

M. Desjardins spent approximately fifteen years studying the coöperative credit systems of Europe, particularly the Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch

Banks, and his first credit union, *La Caisse Populaire de Levis*, was an adaptation of the European type of "People's Banks" to conditions as he found them in Quebec.

The space limitations of this chapter do not permit further reference to the courageous and eventually successful efforts of this great pioneer in coöperative banking in North America. In recognition of his services, the Pope conferred knighthood upon him, making him a Commander of the Order of Saint Gregory the Great. It is important, however, to note his connection with early credit-union beginnings in the United States. In 1909 M. Desjardins coöperated with Monsignor Pierre Harvey of Manchester, New Hampshire, to organize *La Caisse Populaire Ste. Marie*, of Manchester, under a special act of the New Hampshire legislature, the first credit union organized in the United States; and the same year he was called into consultation with Pierre Jay, the then bank commissioner of Massachusetts, and Edward A. Filene of Boston, who had himself been making a study of coöperative credit societies abroad, to assist in the drafting of a credit-union law for Massachusetts. In the Massachusetts draft was incorporated the best of M. Desjardins's experience in Canada, just as his experience in Canada had been based on the results of his many years of study of various types of coöperative credit in Europe.

CHAPTER XIV

CATHOLIC RURAL ACTION IN EUROPE

BELGIUM

Louvain has many claims on the consideration of Catholics everywhere and especially in America. For five hundred years it has been the seat of a great Catholic university, and during the past century it has sent many devoted missionaries to the United States. It is, however, of interest in our present study chiefly because it is the center of the most effective organization of Catholic farmers in the world. It is worth a trip to Belgium to meet Monsignor Luytgaerens, who for twenty years has played the chief part in organizing one hundred thousand Flemish peasants into the economic, social, and religious association known as the *Boerenbond Belge*—the League of Belgian Farmers. Tall, spare, and gray with his sixty years, Monsignor Luytgaerens directs the manifold activities of the league with an enthusiasm which is equalled by his knowledge.

The members of the *Boerenbond Belge* are chiefly Flemish peasants—all Catholics—who inhabit the northern half of Belgium. They are small land holders. The average farm contains twenty-five acres or less. They are noted for large

families so there is little hired labor among them. Like most of the European peasants, and unlike the farmers of America, they live in villages and go out from the villages to till their farms. The village is centered in the church and the country pastor becomes the economic and social as well as the religious leader of his flock.

The *Boerenbond* is based on the parish unit. I visited a country pastor near Louvain and the work in which I found him engaged is the work that also occupies a thousand other country priests in Belgium. He is secretary of the parish farmers' guild and keeps the records of the association. He is treasurer of the coöperative credit association and agent in coöperative purchasing of phosphates and nitrates for the soil, and in the selling of the farm products. As pastor, of course, he is responsible for the conduct of the parish school. He promotes attendance at the evening schools and winter schools of agriculture wherever they are established. It will be seen from this brief enumeration of his duties that the Belgian rural pastor is a busy man.

It was to further the religious, social, and economic interests of the peasants that the central organization was founded at Louvain in 1890 during an agricultural crisis. This it has accomplished by organizing the parish units with the coöperation of the pastor, and then by furnishing these groups with valuable assistance. The most notable expansion of the *Boerenbond* has come since the War, it having increased its membership from fifty-six thousand to more than one hundred thousand families since the armistice. As a result of its efforts,

the Belgian peasant today enjoys a comparatively satisfactory economic position, and he has been saved from the devastating influences of anti-religious socialism which have engulfed his neighbors where the *Boerenbond* is not established.

The program of the *Boerenbond* [said Monsignor Luytgaerens] may be summed up in the following statement: It has for its general purpose to work for the religious, intellectual, and social progress of its members, and to take to heart their material interests; it proposes, in a word, to make of our agricultural population a powerful, educated, and Christian class.

Within the limits of its sphere of action it undertakes to intensify the religious and moral life of its members, to elevate their general culture, to propagate among them professional education, to uphold the standard of family life and virtue, to advance the social position of the agricultural class, to defend its rights, and to insist on its duties.

The report compiled by Canon Luytgaerens of the activities of the *Boerenbond* for the year ending June, 1927, is truly imposing, occupying as it does a hundred and thirty closely printed pages. But the evidence of the effectiveness of its labors is written in broad characters in the still more imposing volume of Catholic life in Belgium.

The motto of the *Boerenbond Belge* is "all for each and each for all." Its patron saint is St. Isidore, the farmer.

HOLLAND

The Peasants' League of the Netherlands differs from the Belgian organization chiefly in this, that it is a federation of diocesan groups, while the Belgian *Boerenbond* is a highly centralized national association. In the diocesan centers the parishes are directly represented, and the country pastor is most often the leading spirit in the economic and social, as well as in the religious work of his parish. More than seven hundred parishes are actively affiliated with the Peasants' League, and upward of seventy thousand rural families are enrolled as members and make use of the credit, insurance, coöperative marketing, and similar facilities of the organization.

So far one might say that the Catholic rural activities in Belgium and Holland were essentially similar. But I found at Haarlem something different: namely, a union of Catholic farm laborers organized on a national basis. The director in charge of the central offices of the union, and for many years the chief figure in the organization, is A. J. Loerakker. It is largely due to his capable direction that the Catholic Union of Farm Laborers has taken its place of influence by the side of the Evangelical Protestant and Socialist groups. Indeed its numbers now exceed those of either of its competitors. It acts politically in conjunction with the Evangelical group and thus the Christian farm workers form a phalanx twice as numerous as the socialistic body.

At the present time the Catholic Union of Farm Laborers has a membership of seven thousand, dis-

tributed in two hundred local groups. There has been a notable gain in interest since the War. Most of the Catholic farm laborers belong to the provinces of North Brabant and Zeeland, and for the most part they live on small holdings where they have their house and garden. Very many of them are heads of families.

Each local union has its spiritual director and the national organization has likewise its chaplain in the Rev. J. P. Kok of Haarlem. Evidently the directors place much confidence in Father Kok, who is also spiritual director for the Catholic peasants' organization. That he should hold this position in both organizations is certainly evidence of a very Christian situation. It is very doubtful whether the same man could successfully maintain his position for a number of years as spiritual adviser for an employers' association and for a labor union in the same city industry.

The purpose of the Union of Catholic Farm Laborers is to promote the economic, social, cultural, and spiritual interests of its members. The union makes agreements for its members with the employers' organization in reference to wages and hours of labor. It takes a strong stand against the labor of women and of children of school age. It has brought it about that in case of illness farm laborers shall receive seventy per cent of their regular wages for a certain number of weeks, depending upon the length of their service.

A special feature of the Union's program is legislative. It has been largely responsible for the passage of a law which makes it possible for farm

laborers to pass into the class of farm owners, very liberal credit being extended to them for that purpose.

The Union is strictly Catholic. Its members in their various local groups make their communion in a body at stated times, and in case of a member's death Holy Mass is offered twice for his soul, the members of his group receiving communion in a body.

The Union publishes an official organ under the patronage of St. Deusdedit, which goes to the homes of all the members.

GERMANY

Before entering into details one may remind the reader that Catholic rural strength in Germany is found chiefly in Rhineland, Bavaria, and Westphalia, and the form of organization which we shall describe as operative in the Rhine country would be equally applicable to the other districts. It should also be borne in mind that the German Catholics have found it highly desirable to enter into working arrangements with their Protestant fellow citizens to maintain Christian principles as against the corrosive influences of anti-religious socialism. Hence Protestants who live in Catholic communities enter into the Farmers' Union with perfect freedom.

First, to give some idea of the strength of the Rhineland rural organization, it may be stated that the association consists of approximately seventy-five thousand farm families. These are organized into sixteen hundred local groups, a local group com-

prising usually a parish or a group of parishes. It is in these local groups that the parish priests are most active. The pastor often figures as director of these groups. Very frequently he is the secretary of the local rural coöperative credit association. This very interesting institution, which has spread throughout many thousands of Catholic parishes in Europe, had its origin in Germany, and is called from its founder, the Raiffeisen Bank. These banks flourish in nearly a thousand localities in the Rhineland, to say nothing of Bavaria and Westphalia, and in a very large number of cases the parish priest is their chief promoter. The activities of the central union of rural associations deal with many diverse interests, including political and legislative aspects of rural problems—insurance, production, education, savings and loan, and other coöperative enterprises—and extend to maintaining a staff of architects and engineers for advice in the construction of farm homes and other buildings.

Besides the banks of which we have already spoken, the association comprises three hundred and fifty coöperative shipping organizations, and one hundred and twenty-five for the distribution of milk. Among the many other interesting features one would single out the many warehouses, the various types of insurance, and the coöperative associations for the distribution of electricity to the farms. These associations have not attempted to enter into the production of electricity, but only undertake its distribution.

The financial strength of the association may be seen in the great Rhineland Farmers' Bank of

Cologne, with its branches at München-Gladbach, Krefeld, Kleve, and Bonn.

ITALY

It would certainly have been surprising had not the great encyclical of Leo XIII, *On the Condition of Labor*, been taken to heart by Italy under the very eyes of the Pope. But few people outside of Italy are likely to realize the depth and the extent of the Catholic social movement which was inaugurated in this country by that document. Christian coöperation became the watchword, and the results of thirty years of thought and action were made manifest at a recent National Conference of Christian Coöperatives in an extraordinarily impressive showing. At that meeting were representatives of the National Federation of Consumers' Coöperatives with thirty-five hundred affiliated societies, the Italian Federation of *Casse Rurali* (rural credit and loan associations) with twenty-three hundred affiliated societies, the National Federation of Agricultural Unions with eight hundred coöperatives, and the recently formed National Union of Coöperatives of Production and Labor which have spread rapidly throughout Italy. Certainly the mere recital of the coöperative interests represented at the congress is imposing.

Every sort of genuine coöperative association is found represented in the national federations. One would like to dwell upon the widespread movement, especially in Sicily and the south, where the coöperative management and operation by agricultural laborers tended towards the breaking up of

the vast estates into comparatively small holdings. The influence of Father Luigi Sturzo, founder of the Catholic Popular Party, is to be discerned here. But while it would be interesting to dwell on this phase of coöperation, it would distract us from the most basic and characteristic feature of Italian Christian coöperatives: namely, the *Casse Rurali*, or rural savings and loan societies. There are dioceses in Italy in which a *Cassa Rurale* is to be found in a flourishing state of organization in every country parish. All told there are between two and three thousand such local banks, grouped under forty district banks and all united in a great national banking system.

To realize the importance of the *Casse Rurali*, it must be recognized at the outset that they are not mere financial institutions. As set forth in their statutes their purpose is the "moral, economic, and social improvement of their members and of the community." The *Casse Rurali* teach thrift through savings. Loans are made to members on character, not on the security of mortgages. The loans are made to improve the productiveness of the member. The financial power of the society is employed to promote every practicable form of coöperation among its members.

Typical is an Italian country parish where the pastor and assistant are members of the governing board of the society; where their laymen have been educated by the coöperative movement to manage intelligently the financial affairs of the bank; where most of the families of the parish are members of the *Cassa*, where a coöperative creamery, a coöpera-

tive olive press, and a coöperative butcher shop are maintained, and within the last few years the parish has coöperatively built a theater and social center. In the *Cassa Rurale* we have the basis of the "white" or Catholic social movement in Italy.

It has been a sound instinct which has led the continental coöperative leaders to keep the financial institutions in the foreground. The coöperative savings and loan society has liberated the local community from the tentacles of the money lender. It has provided a substantial basis for community thrift, independence, and pride. It has provided at the same time a most effective lever for the introduction of Catholic social principles.

There is in Rome the International Institute of Agriculture which has especial interest for Americans because the man who furnished the inspiration for its origin was a Californian, David Lubin by name. Here in the beautiful Borghese Gardens, the Institute houses a rare library of books, ancient and modern, on every phase of agriculture. On the shelves of this library one finds evidence that the Church's interest in agriculture was no recent development. During three hundred years from the Pontificate of Pius V to that of Pius IX there is a series of papal decrees affecting agriculture. The first-named Pope issued a *motu proprio* concerning the "noble art of agriculture," and the last-named was responsible for a report, filling a large volume, on the production of rice in Italy. The Sacred Congregation of the Rota had filled a large volume with its decisions, decrees, and observations on agriculture by 1718. The great canonist

Benedict XIV issued a "Constitution" in 1751 compelling landlords to open their fields so the poor might glean what had been left. And Pope Clement VIII in 1597 made it clear that in his view it was the avarice of the middlemen and not the judgment of God which was causing a grain shortage in the city. He considered it his duty to intervene for the sake of the poor who were in special manner his children.

SPAIN

One becomes more impressed, as one travels, with the fact that the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on the *Condition of Labor* is the great watershed from which the pure streams of Catholic social principles descend to irrigate the parched plains of modern life. On the appearance of the encyclical thirty-five years ago it was studied with ardor by the young men then in the Spanish colleges. Much enthusiasm was aroused, and great hopes entertained. But what could the young men do to put those profound principles into effect? Obviously nothing. Ten years of inaction followed, seemingly barren of results. Meanwhile the young men had grown into positions of responsibility. Then in 1910, one of them, Antonio Monedero, a large landowner of Palerma, feeling the Christian responsibilities of his position, organized on his estate coöperative societies for mutual aid among his dependents. His neighbors seeing the beneficial results followed his example, and presently they had banded themselves together in a provincial organization of Catholic proprietors. It was a time when socialistic doctrines

were being sown all over Spain and labor was in revolutionary ferment. Angel Herrera, editor of the Catholic newspaper, *El Debate*, saw the wider possibilities of the movement, and at his suggestion a meeting was held in 1912 at which a national Catholic agrarian program was embarked upon. Father Nevares, a university professor, was secured as organizer. The subsequent growth of the National Catholic Agrarian Confederation of Spain is nothing short of marvelous. In 1914 there were twelve provincial federations with a total of five hundred local unions and a membership of over a hundred thousand. Today there are fifty-eight federations (practically one in each diocese), with five thousand local unions and with more than three hundred thousand families as members.

The local unions operate savings and loan banks, coöperatives for buying and selling, insurance companies, and similar activities, and maintain a social center with a library open every day and evening in the week. The diocesan group of local farm unions is known as a federation. The federation maintains a secretary and office for the general guidance of the unions. Many of the federations publish agricultural journals for their members. Some of these are daily papers.

The more than fifty federations form the national confederation, with offices in Madrid. Here one is struck by the type of Catholic layman who is devoting himself to the organization. Any day you will find Count de Casal, a large landed proprietor, and president of the confederation, devoting hours to the office. The president of the Saragossa federa-

tion—where the sugar beet industry flourishes—José Maria d'Azara, is a gentleman of large interests, as well as of capacity. The only priest sitting at the council of the national federation is Father Raphael Garcia, rector of the seminary in Madrid, and official representative of the archbishop on the governing board.

The striking thing about the Spanish Catholic Agrarian Confederation, in which the priest enters usually in his purely spiritual capacity, is its uncompromising assertion of the Catholic social principles (taken from Pope Leo's encyclical) which it undertakes to promote. At the very head of its book of rules is inscribed the list of duties of laborers and employers laid down by the Pope. Workmen are to fulfil faithfully the contracts which they have freely entered into. They are to respect the persons and property of their employers. In the defense of their own rights they are to abstain from violence, and they are to have no communications with men of evil counsel who hold out great hopes but lead to ruin (the socialists). On the other hand the farmer is not to treat his laborers as slaves, but to respect their personal and Christian character, to enable them to perform their religious duties; not to separate laborers from their families, nor to impose upon workers tasks beyond their strength or unsuited to their age or sex.

Most of the local Catholic agrarian unions are of a mixed character; that is, their membership is composed both of farm owners and of laborers. Some unions have sections entirely composed of one or the other in which questions of hours and wages

are considered. A leading principle of the entire confederation tends to the elimination of the class conflict between owners and workers by enabling multitudes of workers to secure possession of a few acres and thus pass into the ranks of owners.

In practically every district of Spain the local unions have made loans at a very low rate to their laborer members, by which the latter are enabled to secure a small holding where they will be independent and where family life will be more satisfactory.

The result of the Catholic agrarian movement in Spain has been most pronounced. Christian principles have dislodged irreligious socialism, and the way is cleared for great progress. *Dios y adelante!*

CHAPTER XV

CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE PROGRAM

The Rural Life Bureau in the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference was organized in 1921 under the direction of Rt. Rev. P. J. Muldoon, Bishop of Rockford, Illinois, first chairman of the Social Action Department. He was succeeded in 1927 by Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Lillis, Bishop of Kansas City, Missouri.

The primary object of the Bureau is to be of service to rural parishes and other organizations which deal with the rural problem. Since the development of the rural parish is conditioned by whatever affects rural life, the Bureau is concerned with the entire range of rural problems and undertakes to show how the parish and similar organizations may take part in the solution of these problems. The program is developed under the following heads:

ECONOMIC

Christian view of land tenure.

Promotion of wide diffusion of land ownership and of easy access to land by bona-fide operators.

Coöperative movement, with safeguards against becoming merely capitalistic, which is the case when it leads farmers to produce only for the market and

not primarily for the family. The aim is the self-sufficient community, eliminating the economic waste of unnecessary transportation.

Promotion of business administration among farmers. Use of the facilities provided by the agricultural colleges.

THE FARM HOME

Conveniences in architecture, light, and power.

Development of the electrification of the farm home.

Avoidance of unsuitable work for women and children.

HEALTH

Rural clinics.

Medical, nursing, and hospital service, recognizing that the country naturally produces fundamental health conditions, but realizing that the almost complete absence of health supervision results in a multitude of preventable defects.

SOCIAL

Recognizing the value of the coöperative movement in binding communities and neighborhoods together.

Unifying social life at the parish hall.

Re-inforcing the religious bond with the social bond.

Supervision of the social life of young people by the church rather than an attempt to suppress social life.

Employment of dramatics and choral.

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Rural culture is necessary to make country life permanently satisfying. The integration of education and religion is a fundamental need. Religion with its teachings, its worship, and its æsthetic appeal provides the most important element of culture.

The rural high school should interpret rural life to its pupils.

RELIGION AND WORSHIP

The extension of religious vacation schools and religious correspondence education to provide religious instruction where parish schools are impracticable.

Imparting of instruction to parents to prepare them for their responsibilities as teachers of religion in the home.

AGENCIES

The two general agencies of the Rural Life Bureau are the Catholic Rural Life Conference, which holds a national convention annually, and the monthly publication, *Catholic Rural Life*, which circulates among rural pastors and their people.

The office of the Catholic Rural Life Bureau is at 1062 Charnelton Street, Eugene, Oregon.

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